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COUNTING THE COST.

The Savior plainly teaches that before undertaking the Christian life it is well to make a careful calculation as to what it means to live a life of obedience to the holy will of God. He makes use of a very apt illustration in the person of the builder, who having laid the foundation, does not have the means to bring his work to completion and becomes the laughing stock of the people. In making an application of this principle to the building of a Christian character we need to exercise care so as not to press the comparison too far. For whereas in material things a man may begin a work and so exhaust his resources that he can not possibly bring to completion that which he has undertaken, in the matter of the spiritual life this is not the case. On the divine side the Christian's resources are inexhaustible, and if he fails, his failure is not the result of a lack of material with which to complete his work, but because of human limitations for which he is himself responsible. Paul declares that without Christ he could do nothing, but Christ helping him he could do all things. Do we not misapply our Savior's teaching in the illustration of the builder? We press the point of comparison too far. It is not a question as to whether a man, beginning a Christian life, can hold out, but whether he is willing to make use of the abundant means which God has provided for the completion of that spiritual building which will survive the judgment. Having undertaken the building of a Christian character there is no reason why any one should fail in the undertaking.

Counting the cost therefore is not to be done so much with a view of determining whether such a thing as living a Christian life is possible as to whether one is willing to make the sacrifices and constantly exercise the various faculties and powers of soul and body necessary to bring one into possession of the material with which to build. God will furnish the means, but like the pearl of great price, it requires

the giving up of that which is dear to the natural man to prove ourselves worthy of God's highest gifts. Are you ready and willing to make these sacrifices? If so, then you have counted the cost and success in the undertaking is assured. Counting the cost, however, is not for those only who are contemplating entering upon the Christian life. The principle applies equally to the church as a body. More than once the church has become the laughing stock of the world because without serious consideration it has undertaken that which it did not have the means to complete. True the church is a divine organization, its work is spiritual and God is our helper, but the church has its human as well as divine side and on the human side are certain limitations which can not be disregarded without bringing shame, disgrace and disaster to the church. Broken pillars, foundations without a building, crippled enterprises, these are the monuments of folly which a disregard of this principle in our Christian work, has left to the church.

DRONES IN THE CHURCH.

Are there such things as drones in the church? To one who is familiar with the composition of many of our churches this question is easily answered. Drones in the churches! Yes, such is the case. In every church there are those who contribute nothing, or next to nothing to the spiritual power or work of the organization to which they belong. We do not now speak of those silent workers of whom neither the church nor the world knows much. Burdened with many cares, cumbered with domestic serving, their spiritual life and activities are not open to the common observation. Amid the common duties and routine drudgery of every day life they live in sweet communion with God, feeding on the bread of life and in a quiet way dispense nourishment and blessed ministries to those who come in contact with them. But there are others who attend church services, listen to the preached word, who ought to be gaining strength day by day, yet they never turn any of the strength thus received (if they receive any) to the building up of the spiritual kingdom of God. What should be done with these people? Shall they forever continue fruitless in their lives and thus needlessly cumber the ground? In every hive there are two kinds of bees, workers and drones. The drones are absolutely useless. They make

a great deal more noise than the working bees but they gather no honey, and build no cells. Too lazy to gather food themselves they live on what others have gathered. So do the drones in the church. They make much noise but do no work; they enjoy the comforts and the safety which others have provided, but take no part in the support and protection of that which they enjoy.

Now this is decidedly selfish and it becomes a grave question with pastors and other religious workers as to what is the best thing to do with these people. We know very well what disposition the working bees make of the drones. About June first they begin a merciless war of extermination upon them, never ceasing until the hive is free from these creatures. Such a measure as this in the case of human drones in the church would of course be questionable, and scarcely in harmony with the tender mercy and long-suffering of the Master; but being a clog and burden upon the church some measure should be taken that will at least in part, remedy the evil, for such it is. The pastor must be content to give them care, training and attention and bestow personal labor upon them. If, however, in spite of all this tender care and attention, they continue fruitless, then why should they any longer cumber the ground? Every member of the church is either a weight or wing, says Dr. Deems. What are you, reader?

FAITH IN A PERSONAL CHRIST.

The world has but one Savior, that one the living, personal Christ. There is salvation in none other. Faith in him and in him alone is the condition of salvation from sin. The early Christians knew nothing about a "scheme" of salvation or a "scheme" of redemption. The apostles did not preach "schemes," they preached Christ, not only the crucified Christ, but the risen Christ, the personal Christ, the living, triumphant Christ. Simple faith in this Christ, submission to his will and obedience to his word, gave to the Christian church of the first century the loftiest and sublimest characters the world has ever known. We have come to believe too much in "plans" and "schemes" and "theories" and "systems" instead of faith in the personal Christ who alone can save. "Have faith in God," "Believe in God, believe in me also," are the words of the Divine Master himself. It is not enough that you should believe his word; it is the faith that draws us close to him